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Australian Considerations in Relation to Instructional Leadership and Leadership for Learning

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Introduction

This chapter considers Australian research about leadership and learning. It begins with a review of instructional leadership and leadership for learning (LfL) from research outside of Australia. The next section provides a range of sources of information about the study of school leadership in Australia and includes a review of successful school leadership and descriptions of three major ongoing research projects and two review papers. In terms of the concepts of instructional leadership or leadership for learning, there is not much specific support for either concept in the Australian literature. However, there is a concern to explore how leadership influences student learning, and there are many examples of small and large projects that are doing this and which contribute to the global study of this important topic.

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A Brief Review of Instructional Leadership and Leadership for Learning

The Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966) and Jencks' reanalysis of this and other material (Jencks et al., 1972; and see Coleman, Pettigrew, Sewell, and Pullum (1973), for a critique of this reanalysis) focussed discussion about the impact of schools on student achievement. The Coleman report has, halfway through a complex document of 737 pages, an oft-used quote: 'schools bring little to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context' (Coleman et al., 1966, p. 325). Jencks et al. (1972) argued, amongst other matters, that equalising the quality of schools and increasing resources was likely to have minimal impact on student learning. Whilst one interpretation of these findings was that schools had only a small impact on student learning, there was ambiguity and complexity with, for example, Coleman et al. (1966) noting that schools in challenging contexts had a far greater influence on student learning. One result of these reports was the birth of the effective schools' movement, which sought to explain why some schools seem to be contributing more to student learning outcomes than others. Based on his own and the research of others on effective schools, and his work with schools to improve teaching, Edmonds wrote a short article in Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD's) journal, *Educational Leadership*, which led to the development of an enormously influential view of effective schools (Edmonds, 1979). There were six claims made about the characteristics of effective schools.

> I want to end this discussion by noting as unequivocally as I can what seem to me the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools: (a) They have strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together; (b) Schools that are instructionally effective for poor children have a climate of expectation in which no children are permitted to fall below minimum but efficacious levels of achievement; (c) The school's atmosphere is orderly without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand; (d) Effective schools get that way partly

by making it clear that pupil acquisition of basic skills takes precedence over all other school activities; (e) When necessary, school energy and resources can be diverted from other business in furtherance of the fundamental objectives; and (f) There must be some means by which pupil progress can be frequently monitored. (Edmonds, 1979, p. 22)

This, and other research on effective schools (e.g., Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979), led to the development during the 1980s of a view of leadership that seemed to typify what was observed in these schools—instructional leadership. This view was often linked to the school effectiveness literature, with, for example, evidence that the extent of instructional leadership is one differentiating aspect between high- and low-achieving schools (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang, 1991). Two central figures in the development of this view were Murphy and Hallinger, who were colleagues at Peabody College at Vanderbilt University and who developed one of the first comprehensive views of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This involved three dimensions—defining the school mission, managing the instructional programme, and creating a positive school climate—and ten instructional leadership functions: framing and communicating clear school goals; supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring student progress; protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning. With a dedicated survey tool, this view has become the most used in empirical research (Hallinger, 2009). Building on this, and through a major review of the instructional leadership literature that included studies of administrative work activities, analyses of administrative training programmes, and investigations of administrative coordination and control, Murphy (1990) proposed a more elaborate framework for viewing instructional leadership which included four major dimensions:

- **Developing mission and goals** which included framing and communicating school goals. Effective principals were described as having a vision and the ability to develop shared purpose through the way they communicated their vision for their school.

- **Managing the educational production function** which included promoting quality instruction, informally supervising instruction, evaluating instruction, allocating and protecting instructional time, active involvement in coordinating the curriculum, extending content coverage by developing and enforcing homework policies that require regular homework, and actively monitoring student progress.
- **Promoting an academic learning climate** which included establishing positive expectations and standards, maintaining high visibility in the classroom and around the school, providing incentives for teachers (e.g., increased responsibility, personal support, public and private praise, and encouragement) and students (e.g., school-wide recognition systems, special emphasis on academic excellence), and promoting and encouraging professional development of teachers.
- **Developing a supportive work environment** which included creating a safe and orderly learning environment through emphasising effective discipline programs, providing opportunities for meaningful student involvement (e.g., system-wide activity programs, formal recognition for successful student participation, use of school symbols to bond students to school), developing staff collaboration and cohesion through having clear goals and opportunities for teachers to be involved in professional interchanges and decision making, securing outside resources in support of school goals, and forging links between the home and the school.

Whilst instructional leadership was linked to school effectiveness, it was troubling that research suggested that principals devoted relatively little time to it, and that teachers didn't see instructional leadership as a primary principal responsibility, nor did they want them doing this (Murphy, 1990). Principals were caught in a bind as decentralisation and an emphasis on school-based management was emphasising instructional leadership, yet increased administrative tasks were limiting what principals could do (Murphy & Hallinger, 1992); this was not a new dilemma, however, as Bridges had also described this in 1967 (see Hallinger, 2011, for a discussion of this).

Despite a renewed emphasis on instructional leadership in the 2000s with the emergence of meta-analytic research highlighting its greater

impact on student learning compared to competing leadership models like transformational leadership (e.g., Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008), criticisms were mounting, with many arriving at the view that instructional leadership as conceived in the 1990s was by itself not sufficient (e.g., Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Townsend, Acker-Hocevar, Ballenger, & Place, 2013). There have been moves over the last two decades to develop leadership for learning views which have a central concern to improve teaching and learning, but which incorporate a wider range of ideas about how to do this. Two views are described next.

Over the last decade, Hallinger has developed a more complex leadership model that built upon his earlier instructional leadership model and which he has labelled as leadership for learning (Hallinger, 2011, 2018). In this model, principals and others could be the sources of leadership action, and they could have multiple foci in their work. The core elements of the model are vision and goals, academic structures and processes, and people capacity. Leadership influences these elements and it is these that influence student outcomes. The leader brings to their work their own values and beliefs and knowledge and experience. Importantly, this work is contained within a complex environment that includes societal culture, an institutional system, staff and community characteristics and school organisation.

Paralleling the renewed emphasis on instructional leadership in the 2000s was the emergence of the leadership for learning (LfL) project (www.educ.cam.ac.uk/networks/lfl/). This was formed in 2001 with an agenda to challenge educational policy and current views of educational leadership (MacBeath, Frost, Swaffield, & Waterhouse, 2003). Stimulated by the establishment of a professorial chair at Cambridge in 2000, Leadership for Learning: The Cambridge Network was established, and with philanthropic support from the *Carpe Vitam* Foundation, the *Carpe Vitam* Leadership for Learning (LfL) project began. Across 2002–2006, a series of meetings was held to establish what a leadership for learning focus would contribute to knowledge about school leadership. Seven countries (Australia, Austria, Denmark, England, Greece, Norway, and the United States of America) and eight research groups (two were in the USA) were involved in a longitudinal study that comprised researchers and critical friends working with three schools from each country (see

below for more details about the methodology). The central research questions were:

- What is understood by learning in different contexts?
- What is understood by leadership?
- What are the links between leadership and learning?

Four annual meetings (Cambridge, Innsbruck, Copenhagen, and Athens) helped unpack what was meant by leadership, learning, and the conjunction 'for'. The resulting LfL model had four common framing values: leadership for learning, democratic values, critical friendship, and moral purpose. At the base of the model, leadership and learning are bookended by activity and agency to emphasise that 'leading and learning are necessary forms of activity, enacted by those with a strong sense of their own human agency' (MacBeath, Dempster, Frost, Johnson, & Swaffield, 2018, p. 42). There are four tiers to represent leadership from students, teachers, senior managers, and communities of learners. The LfL model views leadership as an activity that can be exercised by anyone, and learning applies to all. The leadership actions are guided by five principles at the top of the model: focusing on learning, sharing leadership, engaging in dialogue, sharing accountability, and creating favourable learning conditions.

In this truncated and highly selective view of complex and substantial research over many years, it appears that whilst instructional leadership (largely as conceived in the 1980s and 1990s) remains a focus for many, it is being replaced by leadership for learning views. Two such views are Hallinger's own expansion of his earlier view of instructional leadership, with the other being a view developed from a grounded empirical project that connected leadership and learning.

School Leadership Research in Australia

Research about school leadership has a relatively short history in Australia. For example, in reviews of successful school leadership in Australia (Gurr, 2008, 2009, 2012), I have described how substantial research in the area

has a 60-year history and a predominant focus on principals. The 1960s saw research and teaching on educational administration emerge, particularly fuelled by the work of Walker and colleagues at the University of New England, and Bassett and colleagues at the University of Queensland. This work relied on overseas research and a somewhat unsophisticated view of school leadership, with the overwhelming view that this resided in the male head of a school, in an individualistic and positional pursuit to influence others to improve: '[a] good school has good staff … Given a reasonable basis on which to work, the headmaster can *create* a good staff' (Bassett, Crane, & Walker, 1967, p. 3); '[e]ven if he [the Headmaster] (sic) already has a good school, he can look forward to leading an infinitely better one' (Bassett et al., 1967, p. 32).

In the 1970s, research and writing remained largely focused on principal leadership, and there continued to be a lack of major Australian research. This changed with 'The Australian School Principal: A National Study' (Duignan et al., 1985), a study that heralded the beginning of interest in exploring Australian school leadership that impacts on student learning. Using interviews with principals, parents, teachers, and students from government and non-government schools in all Australian states and territories, a survey administered to 1600 principals, and 14 case studies of highly effective schools from across Australia, it was the first major study in Australia to explore principal leadership and effectiveness. A model relating principal role to goal achievement was presented. This model described principals in terms of personal (confidence, willingness to accept criticism, sensitivity, tolerance, honesty, integrity, consistency, approachability, intellectual acuity, good judgement, tough-mindedness, resilience, a sense of perspective, and a sense of humour) and professional qualities (leadership, effective communication, effective relationships, knowledge of learning processes and instructional design, initiating change, and innovation), and the nature of their work in terms of the role complexity and ambiguity evident. Through focusing on task, process and function strategies, principal work was shared between school (e.g., stimulating and motivating staff), classroom (e.g., monitoring programmes and instructional processes) and out-of-school (e.g., facilitating parent and community involvement) factors to influence

directly the improvement of teaching and, ultimately and indirectly, the improvement of student learning.

In the ensuing years, there have been many more contributions that have explored leadership and its impacts on student and school success. Some of these are described briefly below (in many cases, a more detailed discussion of these can be found in Gurr, 2009).

There are many books on how principals and others lead school improvement and success (e.g., Beare, Caldwell, & Millikan, 1989; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Dinham, 2008, 2016; Simpkins, Thomas, & Thomas, 1987; Thompson, E.B., 1994, 1995; Thompson, A.R., 2000), research focused on describing successful Australian practice within a world focus (e.g., Caldwell & Harris, 2008), and principals writing about what they do (Anderson & Cawsey, 2008; Degenhardt & Duignan, 2010; Fleming & Kleinhenz, 2007). A substantial contribution to describing principal practice was the publication and distribution to all Australian schools of a book of 17 stories about the exhilaration of being a principal, *Leading Australia's Schools* (Duignan & Gurr, 2007a). Analysing the 17 chapters, Duignan and Gurr (2007b, pp. 158–164) found that the principals seemed to have: a clearly articulated philosophy and deep moral purpose; an unwavering focus on all students and their learning needs; a passionate belief in the significance of what they do; a commitment to making a difference; a focus on, and valuing of, people; strong support for learning, growth, and development of themselves and others; an expectation for high professional standards; an ability to develop a collaborative, collegial, and inclusive school culture; a view in which leadership was seen as service; an attitude that hard work was accepted; a 'can do' attitude to all that they did; and a high-level enjoyment and satisfaction from what they do.

There have been many small-scale case studies of successful principal leadership. Three that were mentioned by Gurr (2009) were: Dimmock and O'Donoghue (1997) who used life history portraits to explore the successful leadership of six innovative secondary school principals; Drysdale (2001, 2002) who explored, through multiple perspective case studies of seven schools, how a market-centred orientation by principals led to school success; and the leadership of a successful Christian school through a complex immersion case study (Twelves, 2005). All showed

elements of how principals influenced teaching and learning, but all showed that there was considerable complexity beyond this to have a successful school. Even notions of success were challenged, with, in the case of the Christian school, the main indicator of success being the extent to which students maintained their faith (Twelves, 2005). Another example of a small-scale study is that from a group of Australian researchers from Griffith University involved in the LfL project (Dempster, 2006; Dempster & Johnson, 2006). Two schools were involved in a complex three-year project as described by Dempster (2006, p. 56):

> The LfL Project was conducted over three years, in a number of phases. The first of these was the 'mapping' of perceptions and practices regarding leadership, learning and possible connections between the two. The mapping process was comprised of a baseline survey of teachers and students aimed at ascertaining key insights about leadership, learning, and the school context. In addition, a school profile was compiled consisting of information that school leaders and teaching staff viewed as important in presenting an authentic portrayal of the institution, its purposes and achievements. A students' portrait of the school was also generated, focusing especially on the meaning that the school had for them. The mapping process included qualitative inquiry entailing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with school leaders, teachers, and students—the students being followed over three years as they progressed through years 8, 9, and 10. The purpose of the mapping exercise, the baseline survey and interviews was to identify leadership and/or learning matters on which each school should concentrate during the three years of the study. These matters constituted the second phase of the project, namely, the development of 'interventions' or initiatives designed by the participants (with help from a 'Critical Friend' if necessary) to address selected issues uncovered in the baseline survey, interviews, and portraits. Phase three involved taking the necessary action to implement one or more initiatives within the school over the following two years. Finally, in the fourth phase, teachers' and students' views about learning were revisited at the end of the three years with a view to identifying and describing possible links between leadership and learning.

Leadership and learning were shown to be linked, and the development of student leadership was considered important in the secondary

context (Dempster, 2006). Dempster and Johnson (2006) concluded that for learning success there must be a focus on learning (e.g., learning for students and staff, appropriate pastoral structures to support student learning), conditions favourable to learning must be created (e.g., learning culture, reflection on learning, staff professional learning), leadership must be shared (e.g., supportive structures like leadership teams, staff collegiality and collaboration, targeted professional learning), and the connection between leadership and learning must be explicit (e.g., agency of staff in relation to supporting student learning, leadership structures, learning culture).

Small-scale studies like these struggle to contribute in a cumulative way to knowledge-building (Leithwood, 2005) and so there is a need for more expansive research, such as those that use high response surveys, case study research with large case numbers, and mixed-method research. Some examples of these are now considered.

A major school effectiveness study was the *Australian Effective Schools Project*. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) conducted a national survey of parents, students, teachers, principals, schools, and community members on their views on effective schools (McGaw, Piper, Banks, & Evans, 1993a, 1993b). It remains as one of the most ambitious educational research projects conducted in Australia and pioneered the large-scale use of qualitative analysis software. From a distribution of more than 300,000 survey booklets, there were over 7000 responses from nearly one-third of Australian schools to questions on areas identified as contributing to school effectiveness, including the important components of an effective-school curriculum, and the extent of parent and teacher roles and goals for student learning. Among the findings was that effective schools had: a central focus on learning and a conducive school climate; a concern for the learning and welfare of all students; a committed and professional staff; an organisational culture characterised by collaborative decision-making and effective educational leadership; a curriculum that is relevant, coherent, and inclusive; and a focus on ongoing professional development and parent involvement. This study adopted a wide view of school outcomes, with student academic achievement being only one of several outcomes identified as being important for effective schools. While this research was not specifically

focused on school leadership, it was one of the elements identified as being important.

Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes (LOLSO) was a large survey-based study exploring leadership, organisational learning, and student outcomes (Mulford & Silins, 2003; Mulford, Silins, & Leithwood, 2004). LOLSO involved surveys of 3500 students and 2500 teachers in 96 government secondary schools in two Australian states, South Australia and Tasmania (including all of the eight secondary schools in Tasmania at the time). The research demonstrated that leadership makes a difference in schools in an indirect manner: 'leadership contributes to organisational learning, which in turn influences what happens in the core business of school—the teaching and learning' (Mulford & Silins, 2003, p. 183). In a model describing the findings, 15 variables were included with principal transformational leadership, impacting on teacher leadership and administrative team leadership to influence organisational learning, which in turn influences teacher work, and through this student participation and engagement and ultimately academic achievement. School size, home educational environment, and socioeconomic status variously influenced the outcomes of this process. For example, larger school size negatively influenced principal transformational leadership, teacher leadership, and student participation, but positively influenced academic self-concept. Mulford (2007) noted that this model placed much less emphasis on organisational, managerial and strategic elements, and more on dispersed leadership and organisational learning cultures.

The study, An Exceptional Schooling Outcomes Project (ÆSOP) (Dinham, 2005, 2007), explored middle-level leadership through multiple perspective case studies of 50 Australian secondary school subject departments and cross-school programmes (e.g., student welfare) across 38 secondary schools. All were able to demonstrate outstanding educational outcomes over at least a four-year period. The middle leaders were found to promote success through: a focus on students and their learning; high-level interpersonal skills, and generally being well-liked and trusted; high-level professional capacity and strategic resource allocation; promotion and advocacy of their departments and maintaining good external relations with the school; influencing department planning and

organisation; developing common purpose, collaboration and sense of team within their department; fostering teacher learning and developing a culture of shared responsibility and trust; and having clear vision, high expectations of themselves and others, and developing a culture of success. While the focus of the research was on the outstanding faculties and teams, it found that principal leadership was a key to success. Principals promoted success through: external awareness and engagement with the wider environment; a bias towards innovation and action; high-level interpersonal skills and generally being well-liked and trusted; having a clear vision, high expectations and fostering a culture of success; encouraging teacher learning and responsibility and showing trust; promoting student support, developing common purpose and encouraging teacher collaboration; and having a core focus on students, learning, and teaching. This research highlighted the importance of the principal in 'providing the conditions where teachers can operate effectively and students can learn' (Dinham, 2005, p. 355).

Further examples of complex and large-scale research are three major ongoing projects relevant to the leadership for learning focus of this chapter, and these are now described.

Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools (IDEAS) is an extensive and ongoing school improvement project that has developed a framework for establishing professional learning communities to improve school outcomes (e.g., Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009; Lewis & Andrews, 2007). In an overlapping time frame with the LOLSO and ÆSOP projects, a team from the University of Southern Queensland were refining school improvement ideas from a project that began in 1997 and which was designed to explore how school-based management could be constructed to ensure it had a positive effect on classrooms (Andrews et al., 2004; Crowther, Andrews, Morgan, & O'Neill, 2012; Crowther et al., 2009; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Lewis & Andrews, 2007). In particular, the research was concerned with establishing professional learning communities to improve school outcomes. IDEAS involved three components: a research-based framework for enhancing school outcomes that includes development of strategic foundations, cohesive community, appropriate infrastructure, school-wide pedagogy, and professional learning; a five-phase school-based

implementation strategy—initiating, discovering, envisioning, action-ing, and sustaining (this is a process version of the IDEAS acronym; Crowther et al., 2012); and parallel leadership in which the principal and teachers engage in mutualism (mutual trust and respect), a sense of shared purpose and an allowance of individual expression. IDEAS promoted teacher leadership (these are generally middle leaders like in the ÆSOP project) and defined the core roles of the principal to include: facilitating the development of a shared vision, creating cultural meaning through identity generation, supporting organisational alignment, distributing power and leadership, and developing networks and external alliances. IDEAS has been shown to lead to improved school outcomes, often con-cerned with changes associated with teachers and teaching practice such as increased teacher confidence, self-reflection and review, and the devel-opment of a professional learning community (Lewis & Andrews, 2007). Whilst there was less focus on reporting student outcomes in the early stages of the programme and less surety about the impact of IDEAS on students (e.g., Andrews et al., 2004; Lewis, 2006), in more recent years there has been clear evidence for improved student learning and behav-ioural outcomes (Crowther et al., 2012). More substantial evidence of the success of the programme, with a focus on the sustainability of suc-cess, and more research from those outside the project would be useful to confirm the importance of IDEAS (see Wildy & Faulkner, 2008, and Gurr & Drysdale, 2016a, for discussion of these points). However, stu-dent outcomes have not been a focus for IDEAS because it is a process that helps schools embark on a major school-wide change to teaching and learning, and acts to establish those conditions that will lead to improved student outcomes, rather than directly impacting on the outcomes. It works through the parallel leadership of teachers (focus on pedagogical development) and principals (focus on strategic development) combin-ing to activate and integrate culture-building, organisation-wide profes-sional learning, and development of school-wide pedagogy, which lead to school alignment and an enhanced school community capacity to improve school outcomes. In terms of understanding successful school leadership, its main contribution is to highlight the importance of prin-cipals in direction setting (as meta-strategists), in supporting change and the work of teachers, and in promoting a distributed view of leadership

through the concept of teacher and parallel leadership to support principal efforts in driving school improvement (Crowther et al., 2009; Lewis & Andrews, 2007).

The Australian arm of the International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) and the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) are examples of Australian research involvement in major international research projects. The ISSPP began in 2001 and Australia has had representation through research groups in Tasmania and Victoria. The ISLDN began in 2009 and the initial Australian representation was through research groups in Western Australia and Victoria. There is considerable overlap in the research agenda of the two projects. For the ISSPP, 14 multiple perspective case studies involving individual and group interviews with senior leadership, teachers, parents, students, and school council members were conducted in the states of Victoria and Tasmania between 2003 and 2005 and covering primary, secondary, and special schools. The five case studies in Tasmania were conducted under the leadership of Mulford and nine cases from Victoria were conducted under the supervision of Gurr and Drysdale. Three of the schools in Victoria have been subsequently revisited to explore the sustainability of success, this time including observation of the life of the school as well as multiple perspectives through interviews (Goode, 2017). More recently, three multiple perspectives and observational studies of Victorian secondary schools that had been underperforming were conducted (Gurr, Drysdale, Longmuir, & McCrohan, 2018; Longmuir, 2017). These case studies of underperforming schools overlap with the ISLDN methodology (Gurr et al., 2018) and form part of an Australian contribution to the ISLDN, with the other case being an interview with the principal of a remote school in Western Australia (Gurr, Drysdale, Clarke, & Wildy, 2014). The ISSPP studies have led to the production of leadership models with the one based on Australian only research (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006, 2007) shown in Fig. 4.1 (this is a slightly modified version that eliminates some errors in the original).

In this model, principals exert an influence on student outcomes (broadly conceived) through a focus on teaching and learning (curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and reporting) which is driven by their own values and vision, establishing an agreed school vision, using elements of
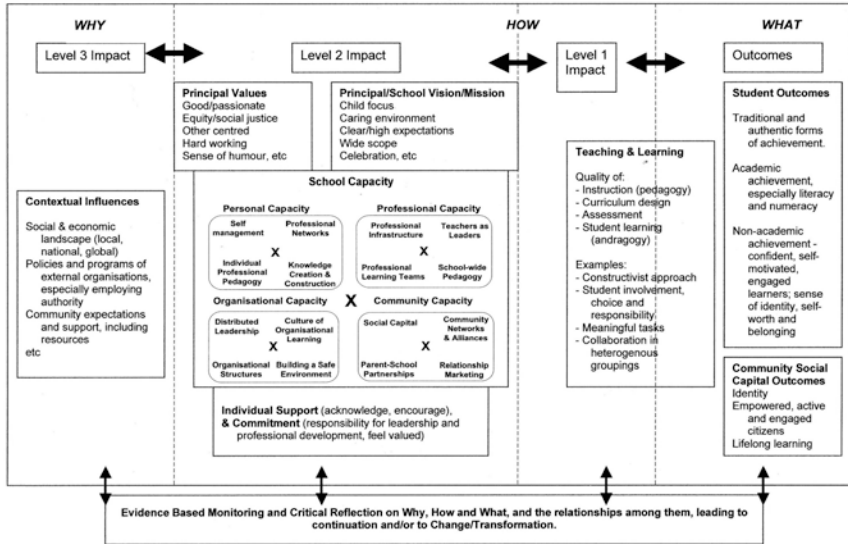
Fig. 4.1 Australian model of successful principal leadership. (Gurr et al. 2006, 2007)

transformational leadership (individual support), and increasing school capacity across four dimensions (personal, professional, organisational, and community), taking into account and working within the school context, and using evidence-based monitoring and critical reflection that leads to change and transformation in the school. Level 1 interventions have the most impact on student outcomes. Level 2 interventions are focused on school direction and culture (supportive, high expectation), and capacity building (through the areas of individual, professional, organisational, and community capacity building, with each area specified with four parts—see Fig. 4.1). Level 2 interventions have a more indirect impact on student outcomes. In Level 3, principals were found to be responsive to external and other influences, and also to shape some of these by, for example, contributing to the district- and system-level policy development, and being involved in networks and professional associations. This model provides several conceptual frameworks to allow principals to locate their work. It indicates that they can impact both directly and indirectly on student learning, but that mostly the impact is

indirect. An interesting aspect of this model is that it can be applied to those school personnel holding other leadership positions, especially those in coordinating roles (see Gurr & Drysdale, 2013, for a discussion of this). For example, the 16 elements of the 4 × 4 capacity-building section are relevant for anyone who has a supervisory role – an important aspect of educational leadership is helping to develop the capacities of staff. Drysdale and Gurr (2011) have developed a version of this model that focused on leader qualities, school context, and capacity building, and Gurr (2015) described a further refinement of the model that included findings from several other models developed in ISSPP research from other countries. Gurr, Drysdale, and Mulford (2007, 2009) noted that the ISSPP research supports leadership impact on student learning, but at the principal and senior leadership levels this is mostly indirect, with direct influence more typically found in the work of middle leaders like department/faculty/area leaders. They argued that there is not much evidence in the Australian context for instructional leadership of the type championed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), with only one of the 14 principals showing these qualities.

The Principals as Literacy Leaders (PALL) project formed as a response by a principal association, the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA), to a federal government call for projects to address educational disadvantage. The APPA saw an opportunity to develop primary principals as literacy leaders, and so, in 2009, a collaboration was born that involved associations with a federal and state education department, three universities (Griffith, Edith Cowan, and the Australian Catholic University), and the government, Catholic and independent school jurisdictions from the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. PALL was a professional learning opportunity, a school improvement programme and a leadership for learning research project. Dempster et al. (2017) described how the project has expanded to three further research projects and programmes in all six states and two territories—it is a vibrant, impactful learning, and research programme designed to 'provide principals with both the literacy knowledge and leadership support they need to assist their teachers to improve reading performance in their schools' (Dempster et al., 2017, p. 150). The PALL project has strong connections with the LfL project, which is not

surprising as researchers like Dempster and Johnson were involved in both. It is a project that clearly links leadership with learning and does so in the important area of reading development.

An initial review of relevant literature established a programme framework, the leadership for literacy learning blueprint, that had five components (shared leadership, professional development participation, enhancing the physical, social and emotional conditions for learning, planning and coordinating the curriculum and teaching across the school, and connecting with parent and community support) surrounding a core that had developing shared moral purpose around improving student learning and performance, disciplined dialogue and a strong evidence base to inform practice (Dempster et al., 2012). Schools participated in a two-year programme that included completion of five modules (leadership for learning, learning to read, gathering and using reading achievement data, designing and implementing literacy interventions, and intervention evaluation) and the construction of a literacy improvement plan in the first year, and implementation of the plan in the second year. It was a programme that focussed on what is called the BIG 6: oral language, vocabulary, phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge, comprehension, and fluency. Principals were supported by a literacy achievement advisor (usually a system-based peer mentor), and this role was considered to be very important (the importance of having critical friends to support school improvement is well known: Butler et al., 2011; Huerta Villalobos, 2013; Swaffield, 2004; Swaffield & MacBeath, 2005). The programme was clearly focussed on principals and provided considerable support and opportunities for principals to be literacy leaders, and there was evidence that with support they could become better at doing this. Importantly, from the beginning, the project adopted an inclusive view of leadership, and the development of teachers in leadership roles, such as literacy leaders, or class teachers who become more widely influential, were features of many of the case study schools (Dempster et al., 2017). Teacher leadership (positional and non-positional) was seen to be 'central to school-wide action' (Dempster et al., 2017, p. 94). Dempster et al. (2017, p. 150) reported on findings from six PALL studies and concluded that in terms of impact on student achievement, and despite some methodological difficulties in the studies (such as the relatively

short nature of the programme and problems in getting principals to complete programme evaluations), 'there is certainly considerable evidence of increases in student achievement in reading—at the individual, class, and school level'. However, as with IDEAS, the core focus of the programme was not student outcomes per se, but rather changes in what happened in schools. In the case of PALL, changes in how principals led their schools were demonstrated, with flow-on effects to how other staff worked across curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and reporting. In many cases, this led to improved student learning outcomes in a short time, with the project leaders hopeful that as time progresses more substantial and sustainable evidence of learning gain will be shown. In some cases, there was evidence of impact on families, although the family engagement was an area identified as needing more development and one that was being explored in further studies.

The final section of this exploration of Australian school leadership research considers two related review papers. In 2007 Mulford published, through the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, an overview of Australian educational leadership research from 2001 to 2005 through an examination of articles published during this period in the four leading Australian-based education journals (*Australian Journal of Education, Australian Educational Researcher, Leading and Managing*, and the *Journal of Educational Administration*). The justification for the years selected was that this period reflected 'a period of major ferment in the area, and of major change in views about schooling and school leadership' (Mulford, 2007, p. 4). Through a detailed exploration of the papers, Mulford provided what he described as reliable, evidence-based conclusions in the areas of leadership (indirect impact on student outcomes of positional and distributed leadership), transformational leadership (direct impact on organisational effectiveness and learning), distributed leadership (importance for school success, but successful leadership is contingent on the context elements), school organisation and student outcomes (school organisational arrangements impact on student cognitive and emotional outcomes; teacher perceptions of schools as learning organisations is positively related to student perceptions about teachers and student outcomes), job satisfaction/stress and leader supply/demand (difficulties with principal recruitment, satisfaction, work intensification, leading

small/rural/isolated schools, and ICT implementation), system and community issues (need for professional autonomy and ownership; development over performance management; limited impact of school councils on classrooms; community support for national goals but ambivalence about how to achieve them), and survey instruments (availability of valid and reliable survey instruments). Of relevance to the current chapter, there were no papers focussed on instructional leadership and only a few that made a contribution to how leadership influences learning, with these main papers reporting on the LOLSO, IDEAS, ÆSOP, and ISSPP projects as described above. Gurr and Drysdale (2016b) built upon Mulford's, 2007 review by considering articles published between 2006 and 2013 in the same journals that Mulford reviewed. They found only five papers that described Australian research that had some connection with principal leadership for learning. Surveying West Australian teachers about their perception of principal leadership, Cavanagh (2007) found, through structural equation modelling, that in an 11-element principal leadership model, giving attention to individuals (attention to individual teachers, provision of professional development, coaching of teachers, and recognition of teacher and student effort) and promoting renewal of schooling (advocating need for morally positioned changes to education) were higher order leadership functions that impacted directly on seven of the nine remaining elements. In particular, principal leadership of pedagogy was dependent on both of these elements. Pepper and Wildy (2008, 2009) explored the implementation of a sustainability initiative, noting principal understanding of the concept, sharing of leadership responsibilities, and enthusiasm for the initiative, were important elements of successful implementation. Reviewing research on the influence of school leadership on student outcomes, Marsh (2012) identified the challenges faced by contemporary leaders (accountability, educational reform, ambiguity of leadership) and suggested that leadership needs to go beyond the current notion of position-based concepts of leadership through a leadership for learning view that was community focused and involving anyone who had the potential to influence student outcomes. Cranston, Mulford, Keating, and Reid (2010) reported on a national survey of government primary school principals that explored their perception of the purpose of education. Principals reported a disconnection between what they

considered should be the purposes of education, the strategies for achieving them and the realities of what was actually occurring. They concluded that principals believed schools are not orientated towards public purposes to the extent that they thought they should be, nor were they enacting practices that supported public purposes.

Reflection

Instructional leadership and leadership for learning, like most concepts, have ambiguity and lack of clarity through the production of competing views. In the early part of the paper, two versions of the most researched view of instructional leadership, and two different views of leadership for learning were described. As others have noted (e.g., Boyce & Bowers, 2018) there is now considerable overlap between the views. In the Australian research considered in this chapter, neither view appears to be widely used, yet there is clearly a substantial body of research that is describing how school leadership influences student learning. In many ways in the Australian context, it seems to be assumed that this is true and the need to label it is not important. For example, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) has developed a leadership standard that is being adopted by many systems/jurisdictions in Australia, and which describes a leadership model that has leading teaching and learning as one of five professional practices for principals:

> Principals create a positive culture of challenge and support, enabling effective teaching that promotes enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to life-long learning. Principals have a key responsibility for developing a culture of effective teaching, for leading, designing and managing the quality of teaching and learning and for students' achievement in all aspects of their development. They set high expectations for the whole school through careful collaborative planning, monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of learning. Principals set high standards of behaviour and attendance, encouraging active engagement and a strong student voice. (AITSL, 2011, p. 9)

This practice is not labelled, other than to say it is about leading teaching and learning. With the other four leadership practices (developing self and others; leading improvement, innovation and change; leading the management of the school; engaging and working with the community) and four leadership requirements (vision and values, knowledge and understanding, personal qualities, social, and interpersonal skills), AITSL provide a complex contemporary view of school leadership that has elements of instructional leadership and leadership for learning views, but which is not encased in either. There are few Australian studies that use either instructional leadership or leadership for learning, and even when they do, often it is because of a relationship with overseas literature or projects. For example, I have been involved with several papers that used instructional leadership in the title (Gurr et al., 2007, 2010; Gurr, Drysdale, Ylimaki, & Moos, 2011). These reported on a reanalysis of cases from the ISSPP by focussing on the concept of instructional leadership, with the need for this analysis driven by ISSPP colleagues from the USA. Whilst we used instructional leadership in the title, we argued that instructional leadership was not a term commonly used in Australian educational leadership research, and as a concept to explain the work of our successful principals, it was not sufficient to capture the complexity of their work. We found instructional leadership to be a dated term reflective of a past era from the USA, and not well suited to leading in contemporary Australian schools. In the Australian context, some academics, such as Dinham, hold on to the instructional leadership label, but even then there is confusion, because whilst Dinham set up the Master of Instructional Leadership at The University of Melbourne, when he came to write a book related to this, it was entitled, *Leading Teaching and Learning* (Dinham, 2016).

Of course, Australian research does proffer examples of significant projects that provide insight into the connections between leadership and learning. LOLSO, ÆSOP, IDEAS, ISSPP/ISLDN, and PALL are examples that have richness and complexity that this chapter cannot hope to describe adequately. There are also many research and professional books, case study, survey and mixed-method research, and so forth, that provide additional knowledge, with several examples of each described in this chapter. It is troubling, however, when major publication sources for

Australian school leadership research are reviewed, that the quantity of publications focussed on leadership and learning is not large, and the quality is somewhat uneven, with a reliance on small-scale studies and with limited collaboration between researchers from different universities (Gurr & Drysdale, 2016b; Mulford, 2007). Projects like PALL are notable exceptions to this observation and show the way in terms of collaboration, quality, and potential impact; it is time for Australian school leadership researchers to engage in more collaborative and complex endeavours to advance understanding of educational leadership broadly.

In terms of the concepts of instructional leadership or leadership for learning, there is not much specific support for either concept in the Australian literature. However, there is a concern to explore how leadership influences student learning, and there are many examples of small and large projects that are doing this. There is research about leadership and learning that is worth attending to and which contributes to the world knowledge about this.

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